



DIVISION OF PUBLIC DEFENDER SERVICES
State of Connecticut

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Testimony of the Office of Chief Public Defender
Testimony of Deborah Del Prete Sullivan, Legal Counsel

Judiciary Committee – March 22, 2023

Raised S.B. 1212 – An Act Concerning A Study Of The Criminal Procedure Laws Of This State

Raised H.B. 6895 – An Act Concerning A Study Of The Criminal Laws Of This State

The Office of Chief Public Defender (OCPD) **supports** *H. B. 6895, An Act Concerning A Study Of The Criminal Laws Of This State* and *S.B. 1212, An Act Concerning A Study Of The Criminal Procedure Laws Of This State*. OCPD requests that the Chief Public Defender be added to the membership of both groups as they carry out their charge to study the criminal laws and criminal procedures of this state. OCPD's substantial experience in the Connecticut courts gives this agency a unique perspective on Connecticut's criminal and juvenile delinquency laws and procedures. OCPD requests your consideration of including the Division of Criminal Justice in the membership of both groups as well.

Pursuant to *C.G.S. 51-296*, the Division of Public Defender Services, as a state agency, provides legal representation to indigent adults and juveniles in criminal proceedings, including direct appeals:

(a) In any criminal action, in any habeas corpus proceeding arising from a criminal matter, in any extradition proceeding, or in any delinquency matter, the court before which the matter is pending shall, if it determines after investigation by the public

Mission Statement of the Division of Public Defender Services

Striving to ensure justice and a fair and unbiased system, the Connecticut Division of Public Defender Services zealously promotes and protects the rights, liberty and dignity of all clients entrusted to us.

We are committed to holistic representation that recognizes clients as individuals, fosters trust and prevents unnecessary and wrongful convictions.

defender or his office that a defendant is indigent as defined under this chapter . . . ¹

See *C.G.S. 51-296, Designation of public defender for indigent defendant, codefendant. Legal services and guardians ad litem in family relations matters and juvenile matters. Contracts for legal services.*

OCPD's viewpoint can provide insight into the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on access to the courts, dockets, and those areas where change may be needed is needed. For these reasons, OCPD supports the bill and requests that it be included in these groups. Thank you.

¹ *C.G.S. 51-296 also requires the Division of Public Defender Services to provide: "(A) Legal services and guardians ad litem to children, youths and indigent respondents in family relations matters in which the state has been ordered to pay the cost of such legal services and guardians ad litem, provided legal services shall be provided to indigent respondents pursuant to this subparagraph only in paternity proceedings and contempt proceedings; and (B) legal services and guardians ad litem to children, youths and indigent legal parties in proceedings before the superior court for juvenile matters."*